



## Parks

In 1885, Canada was the third country in the world to set up a network of national parks. There are now more than 30 parks, spread over the 10 provinces and the 2 territories — from the far north to the southernmost point of Ontario, from the Pacific coast to the borders of Newfoundland. The variety of landscapes, flora and fauna to be found delights the millions of Canadians and travellers who enjoy a host of recreational activities in the parks each year.

In addition to the parks system, there are over 100 historic sites in Canada that celebrate people, places and important events in the country's history. Over a dozen parks and historic sites have been designated as world heritage sites by UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization). These are locations of exceptional value because of their natural and cultural characteristics. Canada is also creating a network of national marine parks to protect the coastline and seabeds, and a network of heritage rivers to preserve those with natural, historic and recreational value.

In addition to these federal government initiatives, there are also many parks and reserves set up and administered by each of the provinces and territories.

## Forests

Canada's forests cover almost 45 per cent of the country and contain over 150 species of native trees. Around half of them — over 250 million ha — are considered productive. Forestry is Canada's most important industry, providing employment for 1 out of 10 citizens. Millions of people also use forests for recreation.

Slow natural growth and thin soil in northern ecosystems make Canadian forests vulnerable. Large areas have not been reforested after trees have been cut down, or the regrowth consists of trees with little commercial value. Almost 12 per cent of forest areas in the Boreal Plains Ecozone and over 7 per cent in the Boreal Shield have trees of this type. Canada has lost nearly all the huge stands of Ottawa Valley white pine and most of the majestic hundred-year-old Douglas firs in the Pacific Maritime Ecozone. Half of Canada's forest land has mainly immature or regrowing trees, which is far from its natural state.